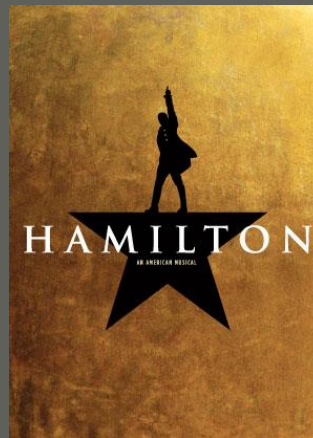


Want to be “*in the room where it happens*”?  
It starts with standing for *something*.

Indiana ACP Chapter  
November 22, 2019

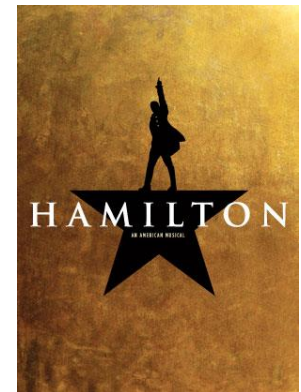


# The room where it happens.

*The scene:*

Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison meet over dinner in NYC, and emerge with an agreement to locate the nation's capital (to Virginia) and Hamilton's plan for a central banking system.

*Aaron Burr is not invited.*



# The room where it happens

*Burr:]*

Two Virginians and an immigrant walk  
into a room

*[Burr and Ensemble:]*

Diametric'ly opposed, foes

*[Burr:]*

They emerge with a compromise, having  
opened doors that were

*[Burr and Ensemble:]*

Previously closed

*[Ensemble:]*

Bros

*[Burr:]*

The immigrant emerges with unprecedented  
financial power

A system he can shape however he wants

The Virginians emerge with the nation's capital

And here's the pièce de résistance:

No one else was in

The room where it happened

The room where it happened

The room where it happened

No one else was in

The room where it happened (The room where  
it happened)

The room where it happened

The room where it happened (The room where  
it happened)

No one really knows how the game is played  
(Game is played)

The art of the trade

How the sausage gets made (How the sausage  
gets made)

We just assume that it happens (Assume that it  
happens)

But no one else is in

The room where it happens (The room where it  
happens)



# The room where it happens

*Burr:]*

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# But what did Burr stand for?

HAMILTON/JEFFERSON/MADISON/WASHINGTON:

What do you want, Burr?

What do you want, Burr?

*If you stand for nothing  
Burr, then what do you fall for?*

# What can *Hamilton* teach us about advocacy?

*If you stand for nothing, what do you fall for?*

What does ACP stand for?

# What do we stand for?

The following statements are not official ACP policy, as approved by the Board of Regents. They characterize (*in my own words*) what the College stands for, based on approved policies.

- 1. That advocacy must always put the interests of patients above all else.**
- 2. That *everyone* should have coverage for the care they need, at a cost they, and the country, can afford.**

# What do we stand for?

- 3. That physicians have a responsibility to advocate for policies to lower costs without compromising care; to practice high-value, cost-effective care themselves, and be accountable for it.**
- 4. That physicians and patients must be freed of unnecessary administrative tasks that take time away from patient care, contribute to professional burn-out, and impose enormous system- and practice-level costs.**



# What do we stand for?

- 5. That technology should support patient care and not detract from it.**
- 6. That a well-trained internist will be shown to be the best value in American medicine.**
- 7. That public policy must support the training, retention, and well-being of internists, and the overall primary care physician workforce, as being essential to good outcomes of care and lower costs.**

# What do we stand for?

- 8. That practices and delivery systems must center on what is best for patients and families, and be supportive of internists and other clinicians within those systems.**
- 9. That patients and physicians benefit from having a choice of practice models, from large groups to small independent practices, and those choices should be supported.**
- 10. That internists must be compensated for their services at a level commensurate with their value.**

# What do we stand for?

- 11.** That the medical profession has a responsibility to advocate for policies to address social determinants of health, the environment, discrimination, tobacco and substance use, public health, inequality, gun violence, immigration and other societal issues affecting the health of patients and the public.
- 12.** That all persons, without regard to where they live or work; their sex or sexual orientation; gender or gender identity; race, ethnicity, faith, or country of origin; must have equitable access to high quality medical care, and must not be discriminated against based on such characteristics.

*Believing in something is essential.*

**But you also have to know “how the sausage is made”**

Burr:

No one really knows how the game is played (Game is played)

The art of the trade

How the sausage gets made  
(How the sausage gets made)

We just assume that it happens

But no one else is in the room  
where it happens



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The art of the trade

How the sausage gets made  
(How the sausage gets made)

We just assume that it happens

But no one else is in the room  
where it happens



# ACP knows “how the sausage is made”

- Coalition-building (Group of 6): ACP, AAFP, AAP, APA, AOA, ACOG: represents over 560,00 physician and medical student members!
- Lobbying: congressional and regulatory branches
- Judicial branch: lawsuits and amicus briefs
- Grass roots (AIMn and Leadership Day)
- Earned and social media
- And of course, evidence-based policy positions

*We do it all. We do it well.*

# We're in the room where it happens

- The White House, HHS, and Congress regularly consult with us on a wide range of issues, from opioids, to Medicare payment policies, to immigration, to GME and workforce, to regulatory relief, to coverage, to public health, to preventing injuries and deaths from firearms—the list goes on and on.
- Even when we disagree, we are invited because ACP is viewed as a respected, credible, and evidence-based organization that stands for policies to improve the lives of patients, and daily work of our physicians.

# We're in the room where it happens

Administrator Seema Verma  
@SeemaCMS

Following

Enjoyed meeting with @ACPinternists today to discuss how we can work together on promoting interoperability and reducing the burden of documentation associated with E&M visits, in order to ensure the highest quality of care for patients.



1:59 PM - 18 Jun 2018

Tweet from  
CMS admin.

Seema Verma, pictured  
with Dr. Lopez and ACP  
Staff Shari Erickson  
and Brooke Rockwern



Then ACP-president Dr.  
López, Group of 6 with  
Sen. Patty Murray, D-WA

Dr. López and  
the G of 6  
make the  
rounds on  
Capitol Hill



Dr. Moyer and  
G of 6 with  
Admiral Brett  
Giroir, assistant  
secretary of  
Health at HHS



# We're in the room where it happens

Dr. Fox at  
the RUC



LD attendees with  
Rep. Ami Bera, D-CA



ACP's Shari Erickson discusses  
Medicare payment policy with  
CMS administrator Seema



LD day attendees  
with Senator Bill  
Cassidy, R-LA

## Case studies of effective advocacy: being “in the room where it happens” as the “sausage gets made”

- ✓ Improve payment for internists' services and reduce documentation and paperwork.
- ✓ Reduce injuries and deaths from firearms.
- ✓ Limit harm to immigrants' health.
- ✓ Reduce Rx prices.
- ✓ Advance and protect women's health.
- ✓ Ensure access to coverage.
- ✓ Reduce harm from tobacco and nicotine.
- ✓ Protect patients from surprise bills.

# Improve payments for internists' services and reduce documentation and paperwork

- Major wins in the proposed Medicare physician rule! Effective 1/1/21:
  - Reverses CMS proposal to collapse E/M code payments and de-value complex cognitive care
    - ✓ Accepts RUC recommendations to improve RVUs and payments for office visit codes (ACP lead the multi-specialty efforts to survey physicians and make the case for higher payments)
    - ✓ Reduces documentation of E/M services
    - ✓ Improves payments for care management services

# Background

- In November 2018, CMS released the 2019 Medicare Physician Payment Schedule Final Rule outlining a new E/M payment structure proposal—including blended payment rates for office-based/outpatient E/M visit levels 2 through 4 and separate payment for level 5 office visits

# Previous CMS Proposal:

		Current (2018) Payment Amount	Revised Payment Amount***				
	Complexity Level under CPT	Visit Code Alone*	Visit Code Alone Payment	Visit Code With Either Primary or specialized care add-on code**	Visit Code with New Extended Services Code (Minutes Required to Bill)	Visit with Both Add-on and Extended Services Code Added**	Current Prolonged Code Added (Minutes Required to Bill)*
New Patient	Level 2	\$76	\$130	\$143	\$197 (at 38 minutes)	\$210	
	Level 3	\$110					
	Level 4	\$167					
	Level 5	\$211	\$211				\$344 (at 90 minutes)
Established Patient	Level 2	\$45	\$90	\$103	\$157 (at 34 minutes)	\$170	
	Level 3	\$74					
	Level 4	\$109					
	Level 5	\$148	\$148				\$281 (at 70 minutes)

# Need for E/M Proposal Changes

- ACP was a leader, along with several other specialty societies, in creating a coalition to push to improve payments for the historically undervalued E/M services, by retaining separate payment levels for each of the E/M codes, and revising the code definitions.
- ACP's representative to the RUC, Dr. Bill Fox (also, chair-elect, Board of Governors) presented the coalition's recommendations, *which were accepted by the RUC, and now CMS!*

# Dr. Fox in the “room where it happens”

Dr. Fox at  
RVS Update  
Committee,  
April 26, 2019  
(2<sup>nd</sup> from right)



# CMS's Proposed Changes E/M

CMS proposes to assign separate payment rather than a blended rate, to each of the office/outpatient E/M visit codes (except CPT code 99201, which will be deleted)

Payment for a new prolonged visit add-on CPT code (CPT code 99XXX).



# Proposed E/M wRVU Changes

CPT Code	Descriptor	Current Work RVU	New Work RVU	Work RVU Increase	Total Time
99202	New Pt, straightforward medical decision making, 15-29 min day of visit	0.93	0.93	0%	22 minutes
99203	New Pt, low level medical decision making, 30-44 min day of visit	1.42	1.60	13%	40 minutes
99204	New Pt, moderate level medical decision making, 45-59 min day of visit	2.43	2.60	7%	60 minutes
99205	New Pt, high level medical decision making, 60-74 min day of visit	3.17	3.50	10%	85 minutes
99211	Est Pt, Supervision	0.18	0.18	0%	7 minutes
99212	Est Pt, straightforward medical decision making, 10-19 min day of visit	0.48	0.70	46%	18 minutes
99213	Est Pt, low level medical decision making, 20-29 min day of visit	0.97	1.30	34%	30 minutes
99214	Est Pt, moderate level medical decision making, 30-39 min day of visit	1.50	1.92	28%	49 minutes
99215	Est Pt, high level medical decision making, 40-54 min day of visit	2.11	2.80	32.8%	70 minutes
99XXX	Prolonged visit new/est pt, add'l 15 min		0.61	New	15 minutes

# Documentation Changes

- History and Exam would no longer be used for code selection; but are performed and documented as medically appropriate.
- **Medical Decision Making (MDM) *or* Total Time on the Date of the Encounter may be used for code selection**
  - (without regard to whether counseling and coordination of care dominate the service).

# Care Management Services

- Transitional Care Management
  - CMS is proposing to increase the work RVUs for these services.
  - Also considering for separate reimbursement for services that are currently considered overlapping.
- Complex Chronic Care Management (CCCM)
  - The agency propose to adopt two G codes for complex chronic care management services in place of the two existing CPT codes.
  - Revising what must be included in the comprehensive care plan.
- Principle Care Management
  - CMS proposes to create two new payable codes for Principle Care Management (PCM) services, which would entail providing care management services to patients with a single serious, high-risk condition.

# Adding it all up: *\$7 billion redistributed to primary/cognitive care*

- \$3 billion in work RVUs, plus another \$2 billion in practice expense (PE), and an additional \$2 billion for the add-on code, the prolonged service and the other care management services.
- Because by law changes in RVUs must be “budget neutral” the \$7 billion is funded by across-the-board reduction in the dollar conversion factor (CF):
  - $\text{RVUs} \times \$\text{CF} = \text{total payment, before geographic adjustments}$
  - As a result, many specialties that bill mostly for procedural services, and not for E/M codes, will face significant reductions.
  - Some are seeking to pressure Congress to halt the E/M changes.
- You can help ensure that the E/M changes go into effect by asking your members of Congress to support them, without changes or delay. Click on ACP's [Action Alert](#) to learn how.



**Administrator Seema Verma** ✓ @SeemaCMS · Nov 6

Thank you @ACPinternists for your support as @CMSGov works to reduce administrative burden and put #PatientsOverPaperwork, so doctors can focus on providing high quality care.



**ACP** ✓ @ACPinternists · Nov 4

Internists applaud CMS for raising payments for office visits and reducing documentation in final payment rule. Read our full statement here: [ow.ly/wHae50x1KJY](https://ow.ly/wHae50x1KJY)



# Reduce administrative burdens.

## ACP Patients Before Paperwork Initiative



### What is Patients before Paperwork?

ACP's Patients Before Paperwork initiative's goal is to reinvigorate the patient-physician relationship by reducing administrative complexities and eliminating unessential tasks that detract from patient care and contribute to physician burnout.



### Policy Development

ACP policies provide a cohesive framework for identifying and evaluating administrative tasks, and offer detailed recommendations to analyze administrative tasks to determine whether they need to be challenged, revised, or eliminated entirely.



### Tools You Can Use

Resources and tools help physicians put ACP's policies into practice. They include resources that assess practice efficiencies and resources on physician well-being and professional satisfaction.



### Collaborating with Stakeholders

ACP engages with key regulatory agencies and stakeholders to help streamline regulations imposed by insurers, federal regulators and other external entities to reduce administrative burdens for physicians.



### Advocating for Internists

ACP has long identified reducing administrative complexities or burdens as a priority. ACP works to advocate for changes in our health care system that simplify excessive administrative burdens that put a strain on physicians and patient care.

For more information, visit, [www.acponline.org/pb4p](http://www.acponline.org/pb4p)

# ACP recommendations to put patients before paperwork.

- ✓ Reduce E/M documentation requirements
- ✓ Eliminate/standardize preauthorization
- ✓ Reduce burden of reporting under Medicare Quality Payment Program
- ✓ Fewer, better, more meaningful, relevant and actionable performance measures

# Reduce injuries and deaths from firearms

- ✓ 2018 policy paper spawns #ThisIsOurLane
- ✓ Call to action
- ✓ Legislation advanced in the House of Representatives.
- ✓ ACP-supported reforms enacted by a growing number of states.
- ✓ Public support is at an all-time high.



# What does ACP recommend to curb injuries and deaths from firearms?

## POSITION PAPER

Annals of Internal Medicine

### Reducing Firearm Injuries and Deaths in the United States: A Position Paper From the American College of Physicians

Renée Burkus, BA; Robert Doherty, BA; and Sue S. Bornstein, MD; for the Health and Public Policy Committee of the American College of Physicians\*

For more than 20 years, the American College of Physicians (ACP) has advocated for the need to address firearm-related injuries and deaths in the United States. Yet, firearm violence continues to be a public health crisis that requires the nation's immediate attention. The policy recommendations in this paper build on, strengthen, and expand current ACP policies approved by the Board of Regents in April 2014, based on analysis of ap-

proaches that the evidence suggests will be effective in reducing deaths and injuries from firearm-related violence.

Ann Intern Med. 2018;169:704-707. doi:10.7326/M18-1530  
For author affiliations, see end of text.  
This article was published at Annals.org on 30 October 2018.

For more than 20 years, the American College of Physicians (ACP) has advocated for the need to address firearm-related injuries and deaths in the United States. In 2014, the ACP published a comprehensive set of recommendations (1). In 2015, it joined the American College of Surgeons, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American Public Health Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Emergency Physicians, and American Bar Association in a call to action to address gun violence as a public health threat, which was subsequently endorsed by 52 organizations that included clinician organizations, consumer organizations, organizations representing families of gun violence victims, research organizations, public health organizations, and other health advocacy organizations (2). Yet, firearm violence remains a problem—firearm-related mortality rates in the United States are still the highest among high-income countries (3).

Firearm violence continues to be a public health crisis in the United States that requires the nation's immediate attention. The ACP is concerned about not only the alarming number of mass shootings in the United States but also the daily toll of firearm violence in neighborhoods, homes, workplaces, and public and private places across the country. The policy recommendations in this paper build on, strengthen, and expand current ACP policies approved by the Board of

Regents in April 2014 (1) and are based on an analysis of approaches that the evidence suggests will be effective in reducing deaths and injuries from firearm-related violence. The ACP has long advocated for policies to reduce the rate of firearm injuries and deaths in the United States and once again calls on its members, nonmember physicians, nonphysician clinicians, policymakers, and the public to take action on this important issue.

#### METHODS

This policy paper was drafted by the Health and Public Policy Committee of the ACP, which is charged with addressing issues that affect the health care of the U.S. public and the practice of internal medicine and its subspecialties. The paper builds on, strengthens, and expands current ACP policies approved by the Board of Regents in April 2014 (1). The authors determined that many positions were still relevant and did not revisit those positions or the evidence supporting them. They identified gaps in policy and existing positions that needed to be strengthened, clarified, or expanded on the basis of emerging research and new initiatives on which the ACP did not have clear policy. The authors focused solely on evidence related to the new or modified recommendations and reviewed available studies, reports, and surveys related to firearm violence from PubMed, Google Scholar, relevant news articles, policy documents, Web sites, and other sources. Recommendations were based on reviewed literature and input from the ACP's Board of Governors, Board of Regents, Council of Early Career Physicians, Council of Resident/Fellow Members, Council of Student Members, and Council of Subspecialty Societies. The policy paper and related recommendations were reviewed and approved by the ACP Board of Regents on 21 July

#### See also:


Related article ..... 734  
Editorial comments ..... 723, 725

- ACP [policy paper](#) updates 2015 policy paper.
- The paper does *not* threaten the 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment right to own firearms for personal defense or recreation. Rather, we seek to:
  - To keep guns out of the hands of felons, *all* convicted domestic violence abusers (whether against a person within their house or outside of it), those with temporary as well as permanent restraining orders, and persons at imminent risk of harm to themselves or others
    - Background checks for all sales.
    - Close domestic violence loopholes.
    - Extreme risk protection laws
  - To require safe storage of guns and ammunition
  - To prohibit sales only of “assault” rifles and large capacity magazines.
  - To study causes and solutions to reduce injuries and deaths.

# NRA Response to new ACP Policy Paper sparked *This is Our Lane* movement

- In response to the most recent ACP policy recommendations on reducing firearm-related injuries and deaths published in *Annals*, the NRA tweeted saying physicians should “stay in their lane.”
- Physicians were quick to respond...

# Our Response

**Bob Doherty**  
@BobDohertyACP

Following

The @NRA lectures lane" and not speak @ACPinternists poli with Renee Butkus, ..., and the stance o @AnnalsofIM, has t be. Read & add you

**NRA** @NRA  
Someone should tell self-important articles in Annals of Internal Medicine however, the medical community see nraila.org/articles/20181...

8:23 PM - 7 Nov 2018 from Washington

61 Retweets 116 Likes

4 61 116


**Annals of Int Med** ✓  
@AnnalsofIM

The @NRA tells re #GunViolence we pledge to ta violence whene Click the link at us [bit.ly/Annals](https://bit.ly/Annals)

6:17 AM - 8 Nov 2018

656 Retweets 1,393 Likes

34 656

**Annals of Int Med** ✓  
@AnnalsofIM

Tell @NRA to stay in its own lane and out of the exam room. Take a stand today! Please click [bit.ly/2Qr7L0N](https://bit.ly/2Qr7L0N) and make the commitment to talk to your patients about #gunviolence Evidence shows that your counsel could save a life #ThisisMyLane #ThisIsOurLane

6:59 AM - 9 Nov 2018

960 Retweets 2,001 Likes

23 960 2.0K

# Public Response



Maggie Fox  
@maggiefox

The @NRA tells d  
their business. Do  
@JosephSakran s  
are very much the  
@CDCgov release



'We are not anti-gun; we are a  
Gun deaths rose in 2015 after fa  
nbcnews.com

11:31 AM - 8 Nov 2018

235 Retweets 436 Likes

11 235 436



Esther Choo MD MPH  
@choo\_ek

We are not self-important: v  
to the care of others  
We are not anti-gun: we are  
in our patients  
We consult with everyone b  
Most upsetting, actually, is c  
disability from gun violence  
unparalleled in the world

NRA @NRA

Someone should tell self-important anti-gun doctors  
articles in Annals of Internal Medicine are pushing for  
however, the medical community seems to have cons  
nraila.org/articles/20181...

6:03 AM - 8 Nov 2018

4,068 Retweets 12,646 Likes

212 4.1K 13K



Joseph Sakran  
@JosephSakran

Follow

As a Trauma Surgeon and survivor of  
#GunViolence I cannot believe the  
audacity of the @NRA to make such a  
divisive statement.

We take care of these patients everyday.  
Where are you when I'm having to tell all  
those families their loved one has died.  
@DocsDemand #Docs4GunSense

NRA @NRA

Someone should tell self-important anti-gun doctors to stay in their lane.  
Half of the articles in Annals of Internal Medicine are pushing for gun  
control. Most upsetting, however, the medical community seems to have  
consulted NO ONE but themselves. nraila.org/articles/20181...

2:59 PM - 7 Nov 2018 from Baltimore, MD

11,797 Retweets 29,368 Likes

613 12K 29K

Annals  
of Internal Medicine

Tweet your reply



# #ThisIsOurLane



**Brent McCaleb**  
@brentmccaleb

First patient, found to the mother cried i us to save him the last one ei  
#ThisIsOurLane



6:11 AM - 12 Nov 2018

5,718 Retweets 15,331 Likes

435 5.7K



**Dave Morris**  
@traumadmo

Can't post a patient

This is what it looks like

@NRA @Joseph



5:37 PM - 9 Nov 2018

33,989 Retweets 97,652 Likes

1.4K 34K 9



**Breathless**  
@breathless2

Replying to @NRA

Now, why in the hell do you think we have something against guns? It's sort of like the trouble you have with life? #ThisIsOurLane #GunCor



12:35 PM - 10 Nov 2018

113 Retweets 300 Likes

6 113 300



**Julius Cheng, MD MPH**  
@ChengJD\_MD

Follow

Here's hoping that the .@NRA and .@AnnCoulter realize that this is the reality we face. We seek solutions, and we won't quit because lives depend on it. Help us with #bulletholecontrol. Join us. #ThisIsOurLane #TraumaShoes #TraumaSurgery @EAST\_TRAUMA @traumadoctors @DocsDemand



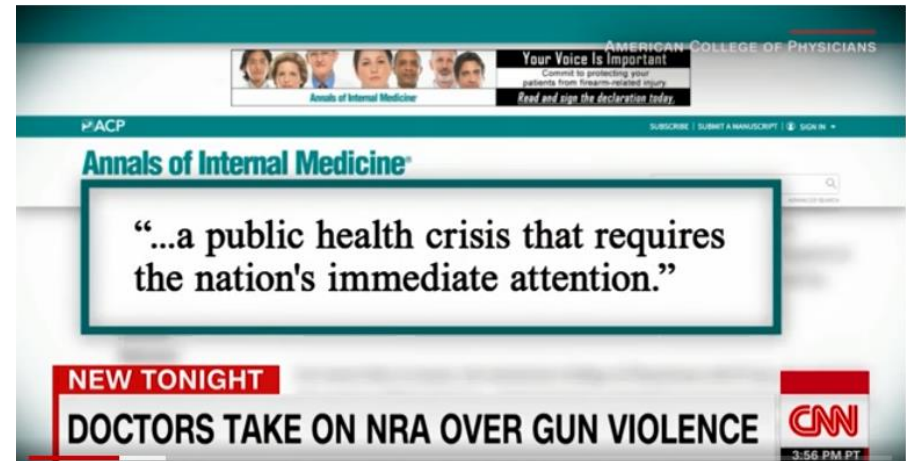
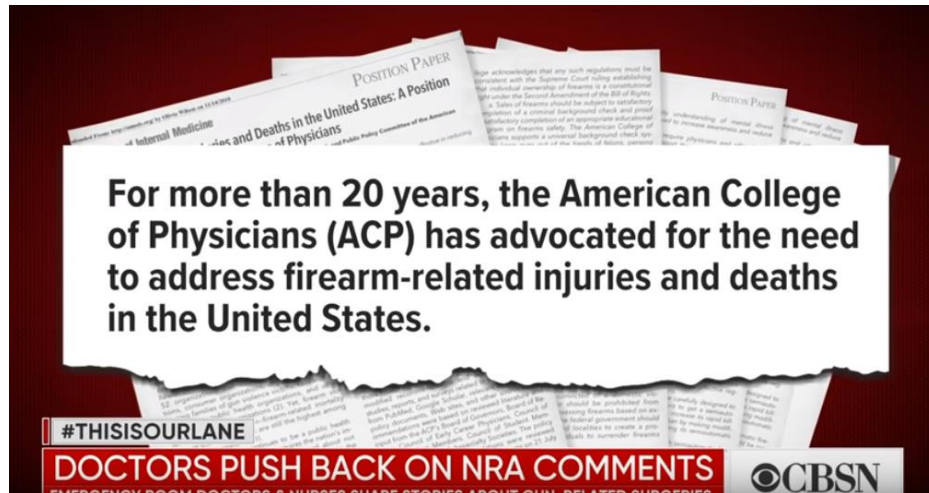
4:51 PM - 10 Nov 2018

861 Retweets 2,112 Likes



# Firearms Position Paper Response

ACP's position paper on reducing firearm-related injuries and deaths published in *Annals* has received extensive coverage in light of the NRA tweet saying physicians should "stay in their lane." ACP, and the position paper, was mentioned in several top-tier media outlets, including CNN and CBS.



# Firearms Position Paper Response: Top-Tier Media Coverage

**The New York Times**

*Doctors Revolt After N.R.A. Tells Them to 'Stay in Their Lane' on Gun Policy*

**NEWS**

**NRA tweet warns doctors to 'stay in their lane' over gun control**

**TIME**

**Doctors Slam NRA's Directive to 'Stay in Their Lane' After Chicago Hospital Shooting**

**HUFFPOST**

**'This Is Our Lane': Doctors Slam NRA After Chicago Hospital Shooting**

**n p r**

**After NRA Mocks Doctors, Physicians Reply: 'This Is Our Lane'**

**AP**

**It's a Twitter war: Doctors clash with NRA over gun deaths**

**THE WALL STREET JOURNAL**

**After NRA Rebuke, Many Doctors Speak Louder on Gun Violence**

Medical societies are calling for gun-control measures and other solutions to what they see as a public-health crisis

**theguardian**

**#ThisIsOurLane: NRA's criticism spurs doctors to speak out on gun violence**

# Reduce injuries and deaths from firearms.

- [Call to Action](#) from ACP, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Surgeons, American Medical Association, and the American Public Health Association, published August 7, 2019, Annals of Internal Medicine.



## Firearm-Related Injury and Death in the United States: A Call to Action From the Nation's Leading Physician and Public Health Professional Organizations

Robert M. McLean, MD; Patrice Harris, MD; John Cullen, MD; Ronald V. Maier, MD; Kyle E. Yasuda, MD; Bruce J. Schwartz, MD; and Georges C. Benjamin, MD

Shortly after the November 2018 publication of the American College of Physicians' policy position paper on reducing firearm injury and death (1), the National Rifle Association tweeted:

Someone should tell self-important anti-gun doctors to stay in their lane. Half of the articles in *Annals of Internal Medicine* are pushing for gun control. Most upsetting, however, the medical community seems to have consulted NO ONE but themselves.

Within hours, thousands of physicians responded, many using the hashtags #ThisIsOurLane and #ThisIsMyLane, and shared the many reasons why firearm injury and death is most certainly in our lane. Across the United States, physicians have daily, firsthand experience with the devastating consequences of firearm-related injury, disability, and death. We witness the impact of these events not only on our patients, but also on their families and communities. As physicians, we have a special responsibility and obligation to our patients to speak out on prevention of firearm-related injuries and deaths, just as we have spoken out on other critical public health issues. As a country, we must all work together to develop practical solutions to prevent injuries and save lives.

In 2015, several of our organizations joined the American Bar Association in a call to action to address firearm injury as a public health threat. This effort was subsequently endorsed by 52 organizations representing clinicians, consumers, families of firearm injury victims, researchers, public health professionals, and other health advocates (2). Four years later, firearm-related injury remains a problem of epidemic proportions in the United States, demanding immediate and sustained intervention. Since the 2015 call to action, there have been 18 firearm-related mass murders with 4 or more deaths in the United States, claiming a total of 288 lives and injuring 703 more (3).

With nearly 40 000 firearm-related deaths in 2017, the United States has reached a 20-year high according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (4). We, the leadership of 6 of the nation's largest physician professional societies, whose memberships include 731 000 U.S. physicians, reiterate our commitment to finding solutions and call for policies to reduce firearm injuries and deaths. The authors represent the American Academy of Family Physicians,

American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Physicians, American College of Surgeons, American Medical Association, and American Psychiatric Association. The American Public Health Association, which is committed to improving the health of the population, joins these 6 physician organizations to articulate the principles and recommendations summarized herein. These recommendations stem largely from the individual positions previously approved by our organizations and ongoing collaborative discussion among our leaders (1, 5–10).

### BACKGROUND

In 2017, a total of 39 773 people died in the United States as a result of firearm-related injury—23 854 (59.98%) were suicides, 14 542 (36.56%) were homicides, 553 (1.39%) were the result of legal intervention, 486 (1.22%) were subsequent to unintentional discharge of a firearm, and 338 (0.85%) were of undetermined origin. The population-adjusted rates of these deaths are among the highest worldwide and are by far the highest among high-income countries (11, 12). Firearm-related deaths now exceed motor vehicle-related deaths in the United States (13, 14). Further, estimates show that the number of nonfatal firearm injuries treated in emergency departments is almost double the number of deaths (15). Firearm-related injury and death also present substantial economic costs to our nation, with total societal cost estimated to be \$229 billion in 2015 (16).

While mass shootings account for a small proportion of the nearly 109 firearm-related deaths that occur daily in the United States (11), the escalating frequency of mass shootings and their toll on individuals, families, communities, and society make them a hot spot in this public health crisis. Mass shootings create a sense of vulnerability for everyone, that nowhere—no place of worship, no school, no store, no home, no public gathering place, no place of employment—is safe from becoming the venue of a mass shooting. Mass shootings have mental health consequences not only for victims, but for all in affected communities (17), including emergency responders. Studies also show that mass shootings are associated with increased fear and decreased perceptions of safety in indirectly exposed populations (18, 19). Preventing the toll of mass firearm violence on the well-being of people in U.S. cities and towns demands the full resources of our health care community and our governments.

Universal background checks

Funding for research

Intimate Partner Violence

Safe Storage

Access to Mental Health treatment

Extreme Risk Protection Laws

Physician counseling and “Gag Laws”

Firearms with Features designed to increase their rapid and extended killing capacity

# In addition to original 7 authoring organizations, 35 have now endorsed it

Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology

American Academy of Neurology

American Academy of Ophthalmology

American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehab

American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists

American College of Cardiology

American College of Chest Physicians

American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists

American College of Preventive Medicine

American Geriatrics Society

American Medical Group Association

American Medical Women's Association

American Psychological Association

American Society of Hematology

American Thoracic Society

Association of American Medical Colleges

C. Everett Koop Institute at Dartmouth

Doctors for America

Everytown for Gun Safety

Giffords

Institute for Patient- and Family-Centered Care

Manhattan District Attorney's Office

National Council of Asian Pacific Islander Physicians

National Hispanic Medical Association

National Partnership for Women & Families

Newtown Action Alliance

Prevention Institute

Renal Physicians Association

Scrubs Addressing the Firearms Epidemic

Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine

Society of Critical Care Medicine

Society of General Internal Medicine

Society of Interventional Radiology

States United to Prevent Gun Violence

# Common-sense legislation has advanced in the House of Representatives

- House appropriations bill provides \$50 million for the CDC and NIH to fund research on the prevention of firearms-related injuries and deaths.
- Passed the Violence Against Women (VAWA) Reauthorization Act of 2019 (H.R. 1585), to provide protections for domestic violence victims by restricting access to firearms by those deemed a threat to them.
- Passed the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019 (H.R. 8), to expand background checks to all firearms sales in the United States.
- Introduction of the Assault Weapons Ban of 2019 (S. 66/H.R. 1296)

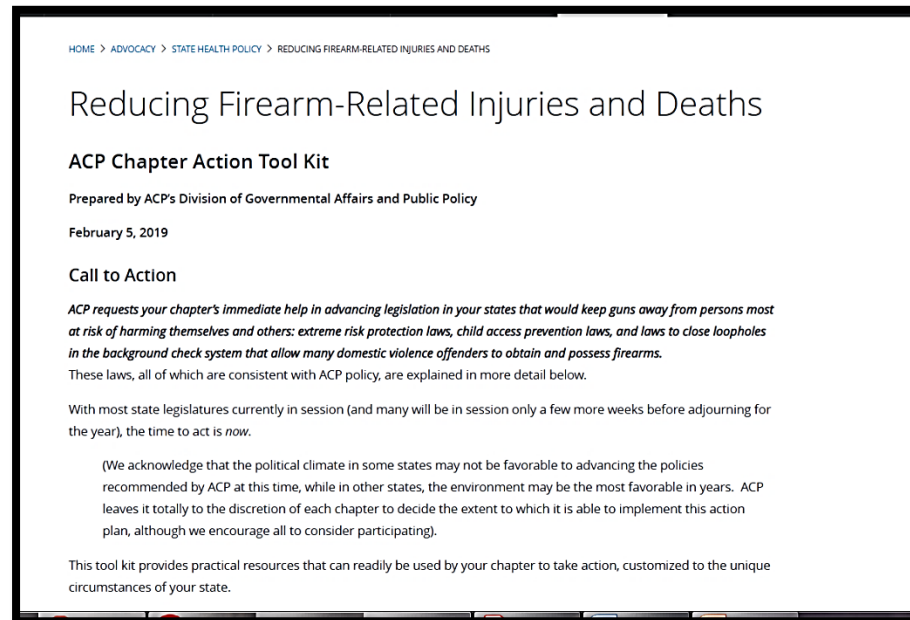
# More states are acting

“Ten states raised their grades in 2018. Washington, the only state to put a gun-related initiative on the ballot, enacted a robust legislative package that improved laws surrounding minimum age, safe storage, and prohibited purchasers, among others. Eleven states enacted laws that help keep firearms away from domestic abusers, and seven states added a background check requirement or improved an existing background check law. Even states with historically weak gun laws, like Florida and Vermont, took critical steps to strengthen laws and keep people safe.”

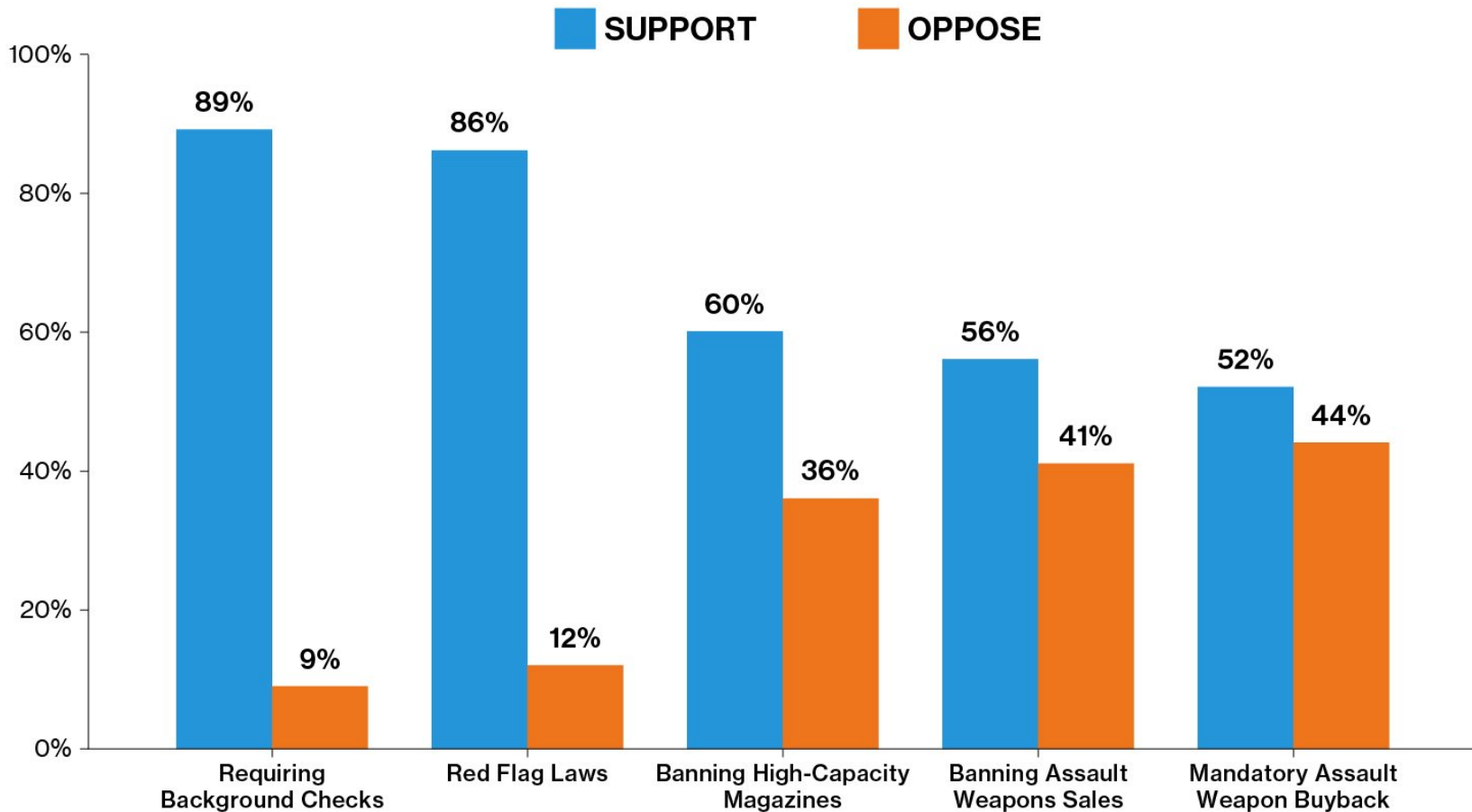
Giffords Law Center, [Annual Gun Law Scorecard](#)

# Resources for chapters

- Several states have enacted, or are close to enacting, extreme risk protection laws, bans on undetectable guns, universal background checks, and closing domestic violence loopholes. ACP developed a [Chapter Tool Kit](#) to help chapters advocate with your own legislators.



# VIEWS ON GUN LEGISLATION



SOURCE: ABC NEWS / WASHINGTON POST POLLS

Six in 10 Fear a Mass Shooting; Most Think Gun Laws Would Help, ABC News/Washington Post poll, September 9, 2019 <https://www.langerresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/1207a2GunPolicy.pdf>



# Limit harm to immigrants' health

- ✓ Federal judges have blocked the public charge rule, which would make it difficult for persons to legally enter the U.S. or obtain a “green card” if they would use public benefits like Medicaid.
- ✓ ACP’s amicus brief with AAMC, others has been accepted in the Supreme Court case challenging President Trump’s decision to end DACA (Dreamers program).
- ✓ Administration reversed decision to end deferments for undocumented persons getting treatment in the U.S.
- ✓ Federal judge rejected the administration’s efforts to end Flores consent decree, which limits days that undocumented immigrant children can be detained.

# Lower Rx drug costs

- ✓ ACP-supported bills have been advanced by House authorizing committees to:
  - ✓ Increase transparency
  - ✓ Address abuse of market exclusivity
  - ✓ Cap Medicare Part D expenses
  - ✓ Allow the federal government to negotiate drug prices



Speaker Pelosi has introduced a comprehensive plan to lower drug prices through negotiations and benchmarking.

“On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I am writing to express our appreciation for the recent release of the Lower Drug Costs Now Act of 2019 (H.R. 3), legislation designed to address the rising cost of prescription drugs. As outlined in a recent ACP statement on the bill, we are encouraged by its provisions to empower the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to negotiate with drug companies for lower prices and to cap out-of-pocket costs for seniors enrolled in the Medicare Part D program.”

[Letter](#) from ACP President Robert McLean to Speaker Pelosi, September 25, 2019

# Ensure access to coverage.

- ✓ Federal judges have blocked Medicaid work requirements in Arkansas and Kentucky. ACP was a party to amicus briefs in both cases.
- ✓ ACP also is a party to an amicus brief in the Texas v Azar case, which would argue that the entire ACA is unconstitutional. The administration has refused to defend the law, and a federal judge ruled in favor of the plaintiffs. Decision by appeals court is imminent.

# Ensure access to coverage.

- New ACP position paper, [Improving the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act's Insurance Coverage Provisions: A Position Paper From the American College of Physicians](#) recommends steps to close coverage gaps, including lifting income cap on premium subsidies, reinsurance, and universal Medicaid expansion, public option in all exchanges.
- Congress should support the *Protecting Pre-existing Conditions and Making Health Care More Affordable Act of 2019* (H.R. 1884), which strengthens and expands tax credits; stops skimpy health plans that do not cover essential benefits and discriminate against people with pre-existing conditions; and provides funding for reinsurance programs.

# Reduce harm from tobacco and nicotine.

- ✓ ACP supports the administration's proposal to ban remove all non-tobacco flavored e-cigarettes from the market, including mint and menthol flavors.
- ✓ On October 30, ACP President-Elect Dr. Jacqueline Fincher participated in a National Press Club briefing with AAP and AMA on the harms of vaping, reaffirming ACP's support for a ban on flavors.
- ✓ ACP supported the call to action by the surgeons general of the Air Force, Army, Navy, and United States to address health risks of smoking in the military.
- ✓ ACP supports federal legislation introduced by Majority Leader McConnell to require a minimum age of 21 to purchase tobacco products.

# Protecting patients from surprise bills.

- *Hold Patients Harmless*: ACP strongly supports legislative efforts to provide protections for patients from unexpected out-of-network health care costs, when additional services are provided by out-of-network clinicians without the patient's prior knowledge.
- *Examine Network Adequacy*: Health plans have an affirmative obligation to pay fairly and appropriately for services provided in- and out-of-network, and regulators should ensure network adequacy in all fields, including emergency care. Evidence exists that narrow networks contribute to surprise out-of-network costs.
- *Include A Dispute Resolution Process*: ACP supports creating process that would allow an independent arbitrator to establish an appropriate and fair payment level between the insurers' in-network rate and the clinician's charge.

# Yet can't we do more?

- What if we were to craft a comprehensive statement of what changes should be made to American health care, supported by evidence, to better serve the needs of patients and the physicians who care for them?
- And used it to challenge *everyone* involved to make the needed changes?
- Well, this is exactly what *ACP's New Vision for American Health Care* is all about.

## ***ACP's New Vision for American Health Care will better define and communicate what we stand for, and why***

- Offer what we hope to achieve, and why, through the public policy recommendations on coverage and cost, payment and delivery system reforms, and improving public health and reducing barriers to care, supported by a review of the evidence.
- Intended audience includes, but is not limited, to our members, legislative and regulatory policymakers, consumers/patients, health plans/payers (CMS and private payers), and industry.
- Our goal is to influence health care debate preceding 2020 elections.

# Why do we need to do better?

- ACP's evidence review focused on four key questions about U.S. health care:
  - Why do so many American lack coverage for the care they need?
  - Why is U.S. health care so expensive and unaffordable for many?
  - What other barriers do patients face in accessing high quality, equitable, and affordable care?
  - What is the role of delivery and physician payment systems in contributing to higher costs, reduced access, uneven quality and lack of equity?



## *Lack of coverage*

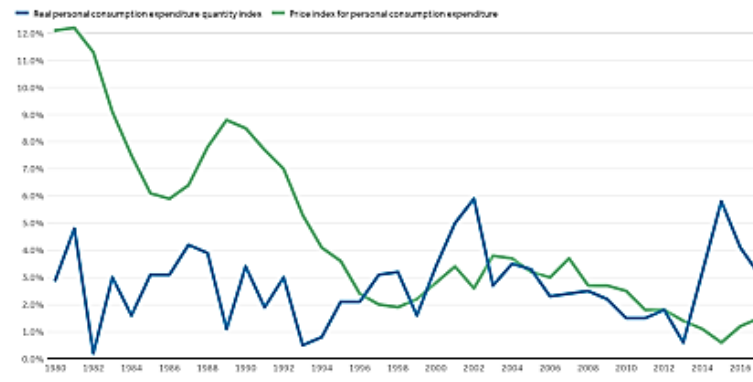
- Despite historic gains in coverage from the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the U.S. remains the lone high-income industrialized nation without universal health coverage, which can be defined as a system that ensures everyone can access quality health care without being subject to substantial financial burden.
- Affordability is among the most commonly cited reason for remaining uninsured.

# Higher spending

- The nation spends far more per-capita on health care compared to other wealthy countries and in 2016, nearly 18% of the nation's gross domestic product was directed to health care. Price has been and continues to be the main driver of high health care spending in the U.S.

Prices have historically driven health services spending growth, but use is now the primary driver

Annual change in price and quantity indexes of health services, 1980-2017, index numbers 2012=100



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation analysis of Bureau of Economic Analysis data • [Get the data](#) • [FAQ](#)

Pharmaceutical  
Health System Tracker

# “It’s the prices, stupid.”

“The United States spent approximately twice as much as other high-income countries on medical care, yet utilization rates in the United States were largely similar to those in other nations. Prices of labor and goods, including pharmaceuticals, and administrative costs appeared to be the major drivers of the difference in overall cost between the United States and other high-income countries.”

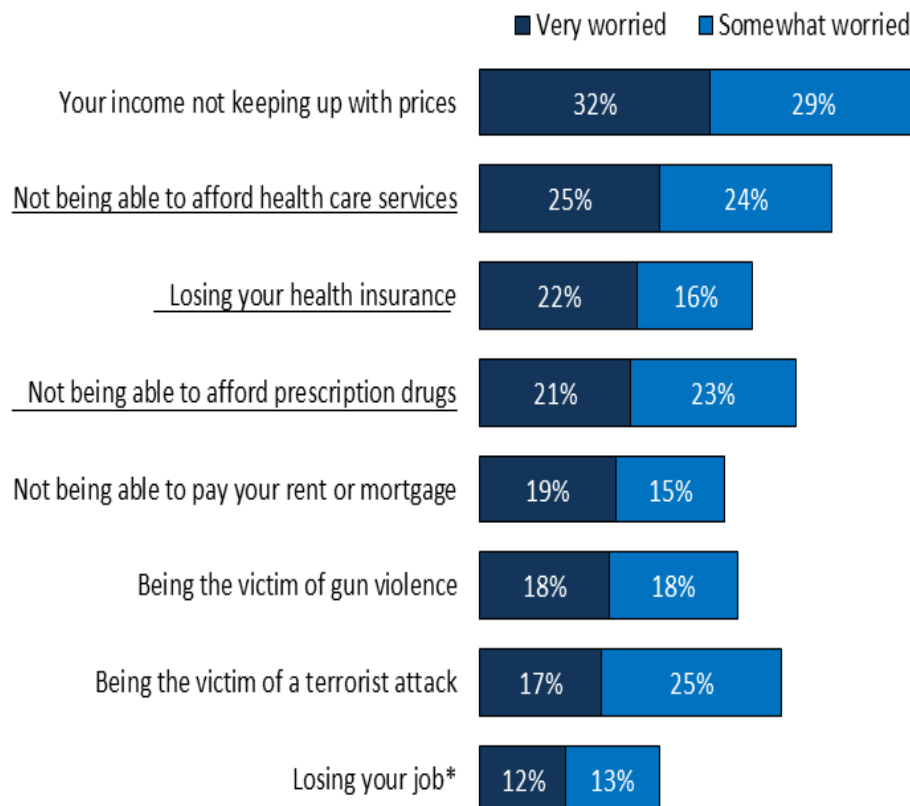
Papanicolos, Irene, et al. Health Care Spending in the United States and Other High-Income Countries, Journal of the American Medical Association, March 13, 2018. Accessed at:

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/2674671>

Figure 6

## Cost Concerns, Including Health Care Costs, Top List of Worries

Percent who say they are worried about each of the following:




NOTE: "Losing your health insurance" was asked among those who were insured and "Losing your job" was asked among those who were employed. Question wording abbreviated. See topline for full question wording.

SOURCE: Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Poll (conducted December 13-19, 2016)

# A family of four with a \$100,000 income and employer coverage spends \$12,500 per year (13% of their income) on health.

By Cynthia Cox

 HHSC Charts |

Posted: September 11, 2018

SHARE

## Direct Spending on Healthcare

A **family of four** with a **\$100,000** income and **employer** coverage spends **\$12,500** per year (**13%** of their income) on health. This includes **\$2,900** (**3%** of their income) in out-of-pocket health spending, **\$4,550** (**5%** of their income) in health insurance premiums, and approximately **\$5,050** (**5%** of their income) in state and federal taxes that fund health programs.

## Additional Contributions by Employers

Workers are not taxed on the contributions their employers make toward health insurance premiums. Economists generally believe that employer contributions offset wages. In this scenario, we estimate that the employer is contributing an additional **\$13,050** to health insurance premiums, as well as **\$1,450** in Medicare payroll taxes. These amounts are not shown in the chart above, but economists generally believe that they offset wages.

When combined, this family's spending on health care and the money spent by their employer on their behalf totals **\$27,000**.

# Higher administrative costs

- Administrative costs account for 8% of total U.S. health care spending and include a myriad of services from billing and insurance related activities to quality improvement programs.
- Complex medical billing and documentation requirements, quality reporting requirements for value-based payment initiatives, and other administrative tasks have made the United States health care system one of the most, administratively burdensome in the world, contributing to less time treating patients, billions in unnecessary administrative costs, and unprecedented levels of physician burnout and dissatisfaction.

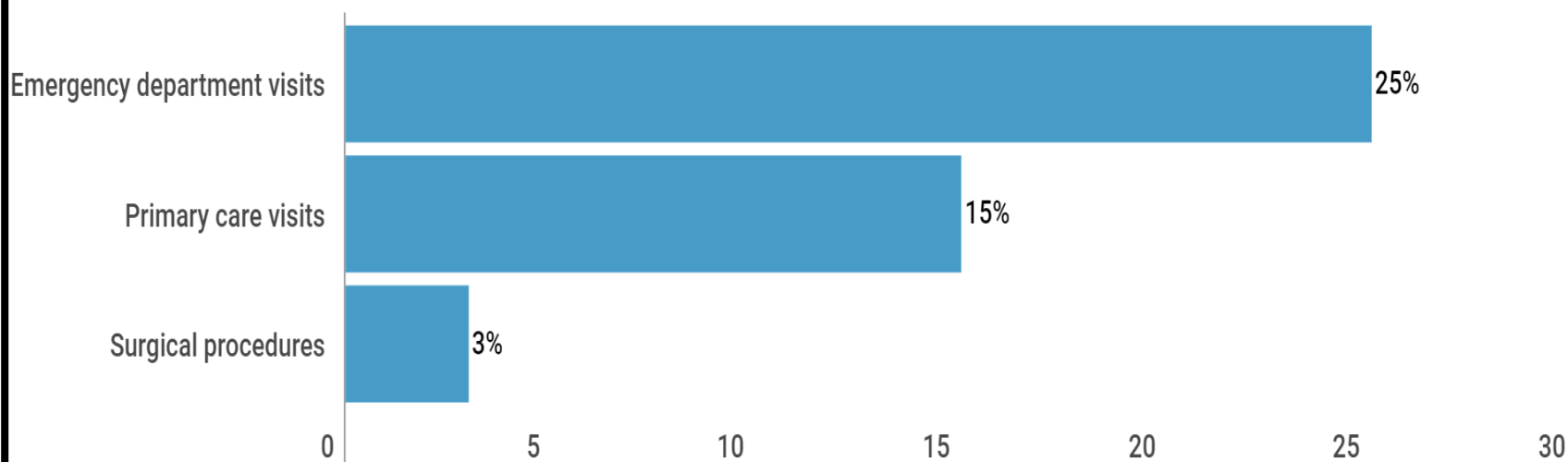


80%

of billing-related costs are a result of our multi-payer US health system

Jiwani, Aliya, et al. "Billing and insurance-related administrative costs in United States' health care: synthesis of micro-costing evidence." *BMC Health Services Research*. 2014.

## Percent of total revenue spent on billing-related costs



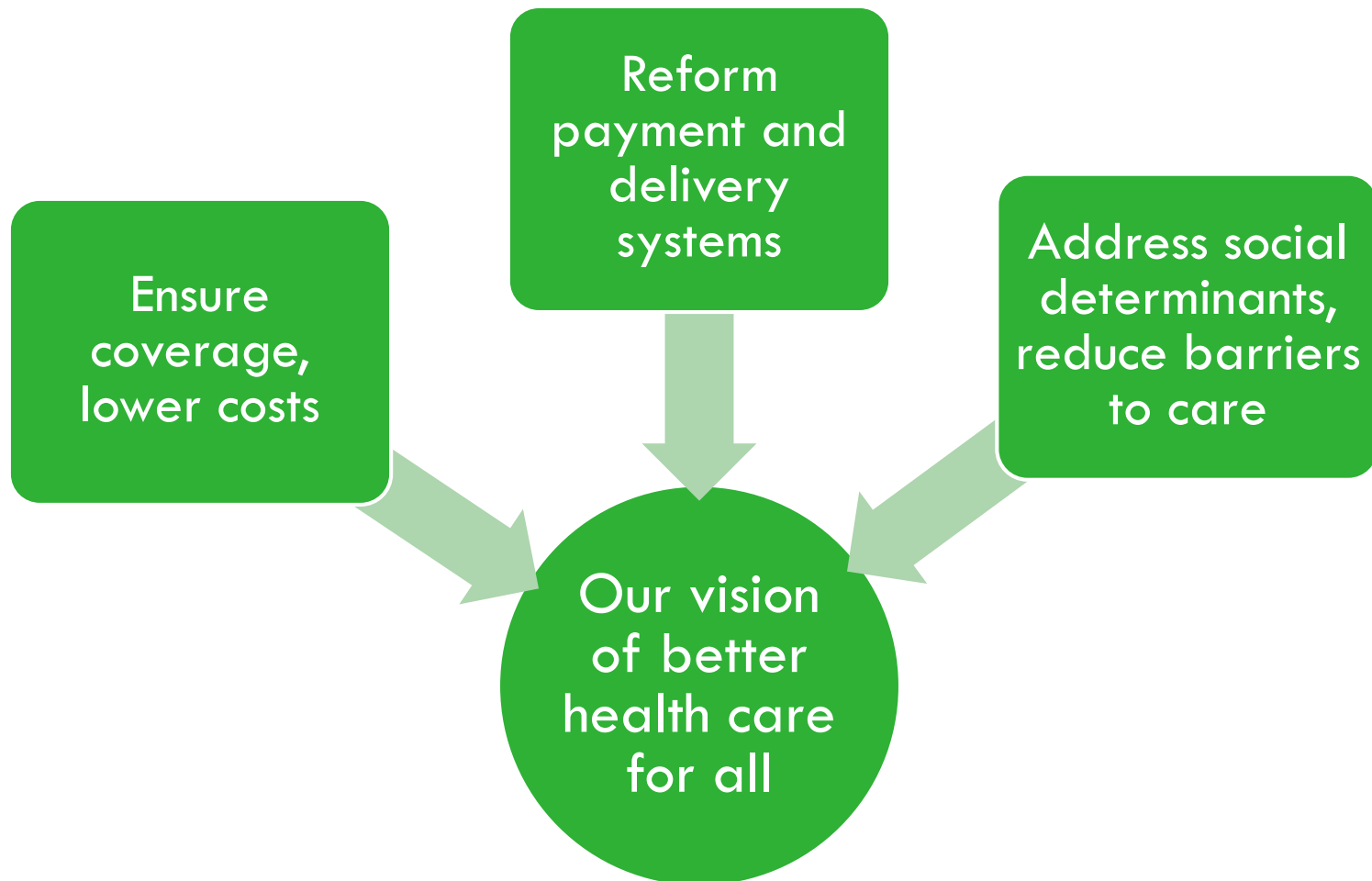
Tseng, Phillip, et al. "Administrative costs associated with physician billing and insurance-related activities at an academic health care system." *JAMA*. 2018.

# Uneven and inequitable outcomes

- While the health care system of the United States excels in some areas, such as decent care process outcomes, it consistently ranks last or near-last in access, administrative efficiency, equity, and health care outcomes.
- Life expectancy has been decreasing in the United States since 2014, and ranks last when compared to other high income developed countries at 78.9 years.
- Environmental health hazards, poor nutrition, tobacco use, prescription drug abuse, firearm violence, and maternal mortality – are reversing progress made over generations of increasing life expectancy.



# ACP's New Vision will be comprehensive and connected.





Hamilton:

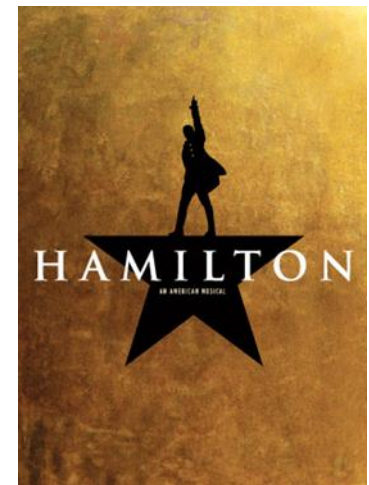
And I wanted what I got

When you got skin in the game, you  
stay in the game

But you don't get a win unless you play  
in the game

Oh, you get love for it, you get hate for  
it

You get nothing if you  
Wait for it, wait for it, wait  
God help and forgive me  
I wanna build  
Something that's gonna  
Outlive me



Hamilton:

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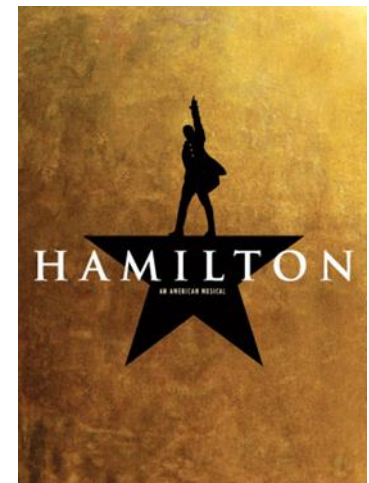
Wait for it, wait for it, wait

God help and forgive me

I wanna build

Something that's gonna

Outlive me



*“I wanna build something that’s gonna outlive me.”*

By standing for *something*, and *knowing how the sausage is made*, ACP is in the room where it happens.

Our New Vision initiative gives us a chance to help build a better health care system for generations to come.